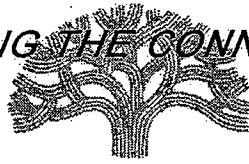




MAKING THE CONNECTION



**BART-Oakland International Airport Connector
Final Environmental Impact Report/
Final Environmental Impact Statement**

SCH#99112009

Volume II - Responses to Comments

March, 2002

Prepared for:

San Francisco Bay Area Rapid Transit District
and the
Federal Transit Administration



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Section 1

Introduction

This Volume II of the Final Environmental Impact Report/Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIR/FEIS) for the San Francisco Bay Area Rapid Transit District (BART) Oakland Airport Connector project responds to comments received on the draft environmental document for this project. The Connector project is intended to improve access to Oakland International Airport (OIA) by providing a direct and convenient connection to the existing regional BART rail transit system.

1.1 DEIR/DEIS Project Alternatives

On August 3, 2001, BART and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) distributed to public agencies and the general public the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIR/DEIS) for the Connector project, which is located within the City of Oakland, Alameda County, California. The DEIR/DEIS evaluated three alternatives: (1) a No Action Alternative under which current AirBART bus service would continue; (2) a Quality Bus alternative providing improved bus service through a seamless transfer between BART and the bus, and traffic signal preemption along the bus route; and (3) Automated Guideway Transit (AGT) providing an exclusive aerial guideway for transit vehicles. The proposed project was the AGT with an alignment in the median of Hegenberger Road, along the east side of Airport Drive, and through the OIA parking lot to the terminal. In addition to the proposed project, three design options and the option of including intermediate stops were also analyzed: Option A, an alternate alignment to the west of Hegenberger Road north of Interstate I-880; Option B, an alternate alignment west of Hegenberger Road south of Interstate I-880; Option D, an alternative alignment to the east of Airport Drive south of Air Cargo Road, entering the airport terminal area from the east; and Intermediate Stations, which added two AGT stops along the alignment between Interstate I-880 and Doolittle Drive.

1.2 Preferred Alternative

Volume I of the FEIR/FEIS identifies and provides a focused environmental analysis of the AGT as the preferred alternative, and incorporates clarifications and corrections to that focused analysis resulting from public comments. The preferred alternative is comprised of the AGT alignment with Option A and intermediate stations. More specifically this AGT alignment would be along the west side of Hegenberger Road between San Leandro Street and Edgewater Road; in the median of Hegenberger Road between Edgewater Road and Pardee Drive; under Doolittle Drive via a tunnel; and adjacent to the east side of Airport Drive between Doolittle Drive and the OIA terminal, following the airport entrance road to

an AGT station at the airport parking garage. Intermediate stations would be on Hegenberger Road at Edgewater Road and Hegenberger Road near Doolittle Drive and Airport Access Road. The AGT would be designed to provide a direct and convenient transfer to the AGT system for passengers arriving at the Coliseum station on the existing BART system. At the Airport, arriving passengers would use the pedestrian bridge from the terminal to the parking structure and enter a BART station inside the parking structure, using one BART ticket all the way from the Airport to their final destination anywhere on the BART system. The AGT Project also includes a maintenance facility to be located at the existing Coliseum parking area.

1.3 Comments and Responses

A 45-day comment period for the DEIR/DEIS began August 3, 2001 and ended September 17, 2001. During the public review period, a number of comments on environmental issues evaluated in the DEIR/DEIS were received from federal, state, and local agencies, public groups, and individuals. BART and FTA also held a public hearing on September 12, 2001 to receive verbal and additional written comments.

All comments on the DEIR/DEIS, and the responses thereto, are presented in this document, Volume II. Section 2 provides the written and verbal comments on the DEIR/DEIS and presents responses to substantive and significant environmental issues raised in the comments as required in the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines §15132 and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) regulations (40 C.F.R. §1503.4).

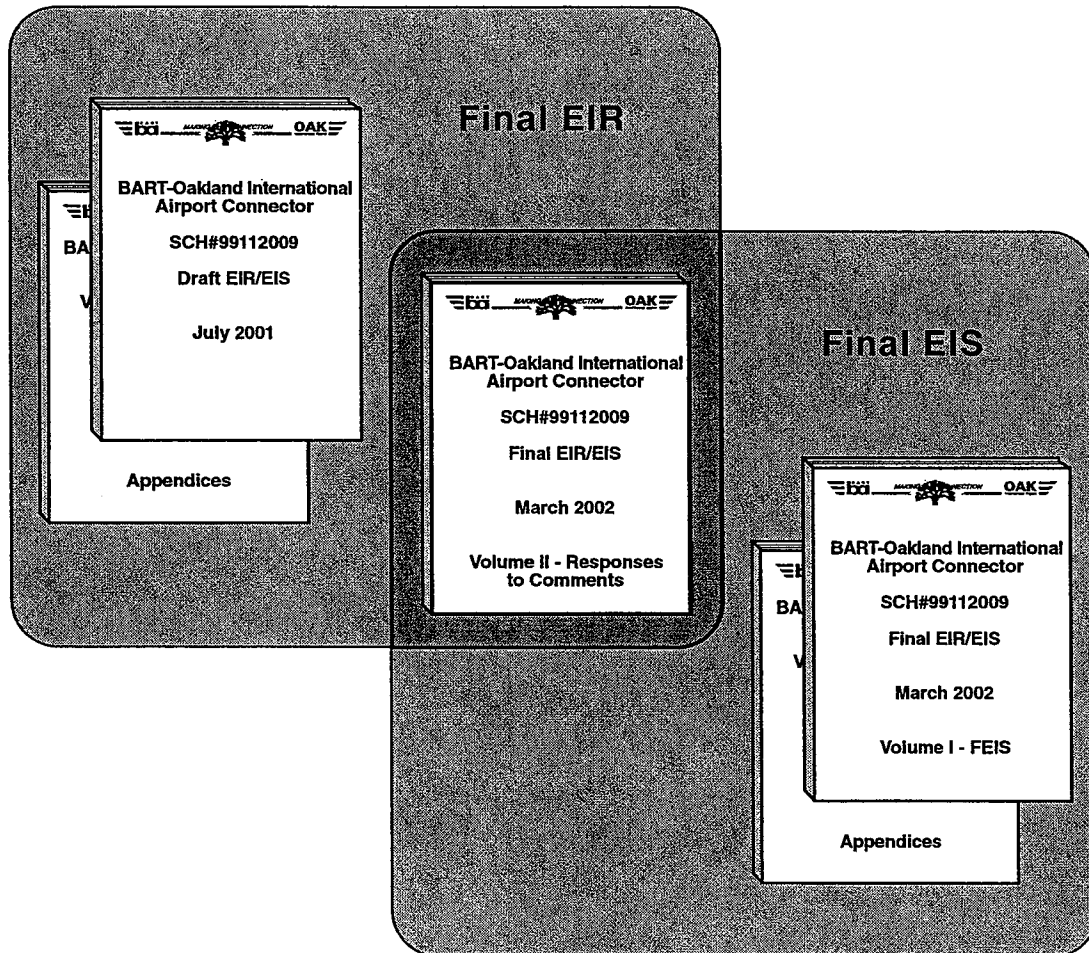
Each comment letter has been reproduced and is followed by the responses in order of occurrence. Each letter and each comment within each letter has been numbered. For example, the fourth comment of the second letter would be indicated as 2-4. The corresponding response to that comment would be Response 2-4. Table 2-1 lists each letter and comment received on the DEIR/DEIS.

The focus of the responses is on the disposition of substantive and significant environmental issues that are raised in the comments, as specified by §15088(b) of the State CEQA Guidelines and 40 C.F.R. §1503.4. Detailed responses are not provided to comments on the merits of the proposed project. When a comment is not directed to significant environmental issues, the responses indicate that no further response is warranted.

Responses to comments generally provide clarification, explanation, or elaboration. In some cases, they also modify or correct the text of the DEIR/DEIS. For convenience, Section 3 of this document provides all revisions to the text of the DEIR/DEIS that result from the comments. Section 3 also provides modifications and corrections to the text of the DEIR/DEIS that are necessary due to changes in regulatory requirements and contain other updated information, as well as correction of minor typographical errors.

This Volume II, which compiles comments and responses, together with Volume I, containing a focused environmental analysis of the preferred alternative, constitute the Final EIS for the project in accordance with FTA procedures for preparing final NEPA documents. In addition, this Responses to Comments document, together with the DEIR/DEIS, constitute the Final EIR that is being considered by the BART Board in its review of the

proposed project pursuant to CEQA. If the BART Board decides to adopt the project, it must consider these responses to comments and make specific findings that the FEIR complies with CEQA. Similarly, the FTA must approve the FEIS pursuant to NEPA. The relationship between these documents for CEQA and NEPA purposes is illustrated in Figure 1.3-1.



**Figure 1.3-1
Illustrative Representation of Project CEQA and NEPA Documents**